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4 April 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: NVN Civilian Casualty Figures and Methodology

1. This is an addendum to the 4 April ORR memo on casualties in North Vietnam. The other memo was written so that it could be passed to Senator Symington, if you cannot avoid giving him a piece of paper. This memo is for your background information only.
2. The casualty estimates in the ORR memorandum are a combination of independently derived CIA estimates, and DIA estimates refined by CIA analysts. The estimates of the civilian and military casualties resulting from attacks on fixed targets and the military casualties resulting from aerial reconnaissance are DIA estimates weighted by CIA

The estimates of civilian casualties attributable to armed reconnaissance are strictly CIA estimates, since DIA makes no attempt to estimate these casualties.

3. The major differences between CIA and DIA estimates are as follows:

a) DIA estimates of casualties resulting from attacks on fixed targets are expressed in a broad range of minimum and maximum casualties.* The maximum figures assume that the population in the target area was unwarned; the minimum figures assume warning and full resort to civil defense and protective measures. We have found fairly consistently that the initial attacks on JCS fixed targets have inflicted casualties that are four times greater than the minimum DIA estimates. Consequently, we have weighted the DIA estimates by a factor

* The maximum figure would generally be 10 times greater than the minimum; e.g., 100 - 1,000.

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of four for all initial strikes on JCS fixed targets and accepted the DIA estimates for all targets undergoing restrikes. Thus if a DIA casualty estimate for an initial strike is presented as ranging from 12-120, we would weight the minimum figure by four and estimate casualties as 48.

b) The estimates of military casualties resulting from armed reconnaissance are probably the most unreliable of all our casualty estimates. We have accepted DIA factors for estimating these casualties with the exception of specific categories -- trucks and watercraft -- for which the DIA weights were reduced to reflect information gained from POW reports [redacted]

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c) Civilian casualties resulting from armed reconnaissance are estimated only by CIA. We develop our estimates on an all-source basis. DIA works exclusively from photography and pilot reports, and does not attempt to estimate civilian casualties resulting from armed reconnaissance. Since these casualties account for the bulk of casualties, the CIA estimates of total casualties are significantly higher than those of DIA.

George A. Carver, Jr.
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

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Copy No. 3 - Mr. Smith, DDI
Copy No. 4 - Mr. Morell, D/ORR
Copy No. 5 - Mr. Walsh, ORR
Copies 6, 7, 8 and 9 - SAVA

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND REPORTS

4 April 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR:

SUBJECT: Casualties in North Vietnam

The air campaign against North Vietnam had accounted for an estimated 36,000-38,000 casualties by the end of 1966 as shown in the table. Civilians accounted for over two-thirds of total casualties. The preponderance of civilian casualties are workers at military installations or workers directly engaged in the repair, maintenance and operation of the logistics system which moves military supplies and personnel into Laos and South Vietnam.

Estimated Casualties Resulting from the Bombing of North Vietnam,
1965-1966

	<u>1965</u>	<u>1966</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Civilians</u>	<u>6,000</u>	<u>17,900-20,200</u>	<u>23,900-26,200</u>
Fixed target strikes	2,000	900	2,900
Armed reconnaissance strikes	4,000	17,000-19,300	21,000-23,300
<u>Military</u>	<u>7,200</u>	<u>4,650</u>	<u>11,850</u>
Fixed target strikes	4,300	400	4,700
Armed reconnaissance strikes	2,900	4,250	7,150
<u>Total</u>	<u>13,200</u>	<u>22,550-24,850</u>	<u>35,750-38,050</u>

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Although civilians have accounted for just over two-thirds of cumulative casualties since the bombing campaigns began, the composition of the casualties has changed radically over time. In 1966, for example, civilians accounted for about 80 percent of the casualties, compared with 45 percent in 1965. Similarly, casualties resulting from armed reconnaissance against military supply routes accounted for 94 percent of the total in 1966, compared with only 52 percent in 1965.

The increase in casualties during 1966 is a function of the growing scale of the air campaign, the greater emphasis on armed reconnaissance against lines of communication and the selection of a few fixed targets located in more heavily populated areas. Despite the increase in casualties, however, the number per mission has remained about stable.

The changing nature of the air campaign is also apparent in the statistics on civilian casualties. Estimated civilian casualties in 1966 are about three times those in 1965. In 1966, however, just over 5 percent of civilian casualties resulted from attacks on fixed targets, whereas in 1965 attacks on fixed targets accounted for one-third of civilian casualties.

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